

May 9, 2017

Honorable Triston Cole, Chair
House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee
1389 House Office Building
Lansing, MI 48909

Greetings Chair Cole and Members of the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee:

The American Association of University Women of Michigan, in keeping with its mission to advance equity for women and girls through advocacy, education, philanthropy, and research, opposes SB 163, a bill that would establish Choose Life license plates in Michigan to provide funding for crisis pregnancy centers and other anti-abortion activities.

There are numerous problems with this bill, among them:

- The name of the license plate “Choose Life” promotes a religious and political viewpoint that is barred by our state constitution. A more neutral phrase such as “Women’s Health” would be religiously and politically neutral. We suggest an amendment to pick a neutral phrase for the license plate and the fund for the money raised from it.
- The proceeds are permitted to fund unregulated, unlicensed, or unregistered organizations where the use of the state-collected money cannot be adequately audited. A prime case in point is the specific inclusion of crisis pregnancy centers. These centers often provide biased and medically inaccurate information to women who are seeking family planning services. Often there are no medical professionals at all in the centers though staff might be wearing lab coats to give the impression that they are medical staff. These centers are suspected of serving as baby-finding for adoption agencies.
 - In 2015, the NARAL Pro-Choice America [carried out an undercover investigation in 10 states](#) to document the scare tactics used and lies disseminated by crisis pregnancy centers. They found that the centers used misleading advertising—such as “Pregnant? Need Help? You have options”—to suggest inaccurately they were family planning centers. The centers also gave NARAL’s undercover investigators false health information, saying that getting an abortion can cause breast cancer, cervical incompetence, infertility, and mental health complications—none of which is true.

Until these centers are state regulated, no state support for them should be provided through a mechanism such as a license plate.

- The agencies listed for funding may be affiliated with churches or religious organizations that are overtly biased and discriminatory in their employment policies and service orientation.

We urge the Committee to vote no on reporting out SB 163.

Sincerely,

Mary Pollock
Government Relations Coordinator